

# **IFES/KAZAKHSTAN QUARTERLY REPORT**

## **Q2-02 – January – March 2002**

### **I. PROGRAMMATIC ACTIVITIES**

#### ***Civic Education Curriculum Development Project***

During the second quarter of FY 2002, IFES extended its reach into the Kazakh-speaking community by sending 2,019 of its Kazakh language civic education textbooks, “Introduction to Civic Education,” to newly-participating secondary schools in Kazakhstan, thus bringing the total number of IFES pilot schools using the pilot course and materials to over 200. These schools began to integrate the material into their civic education curriculum for use in the second semester of the current 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade school year.

IFES/Kazakhstan worked to prepare a new, third edition of its student textbook. IFES assembled a group of locally-based editors representing a strong cross-section of the public interest sector in Kazakhstan, and worked with these individuals to review and fine-tune the textbook before finalizing a third edition. The third edition, once prepared, will be printed in both Russian and Kazakh and submitted to the Ministry of Education for review. It is anticipated that this new edition will be adopted for use in pilot schools by autumn 2002. IFES has set as a priority local ownership of the student textbook, and has encouraged the involvement of well-established local authors from the private sector to help refine the text. At the same time, IFES has worked closely with the Ministry of Education to make sure that all materials, including the student textbook and teacher’s manual, conform to the established state standards for civic education.

IFES staff met and discussed the textbook and teachers’ manual project with a variety of local education development experts who have also received international training. IFES/Kazakhstan worked with these experts to further revise the teacher’s manual and obtain an independent evaluation on the text. Individual contributors expressed interest in comparing the IFES book with civic education materials developed and used in other countries of Eastern Europe and the NIS, drawing upon the best elements to use to improve the Kazakhstan book.

The revision of the Civic Education textbook will further necessitate an updating of the Teachers’ Manual, in order to synchronize the two documents. Working with local civic education expert Elena Vinogradova, IFES created a new draft of the Teacher’s Manual during the second quarter. Once fine-tuned and used in concert with the textbook, it will allow the entire civic education course to be more interactive and educational.

The student textbook and civics course continued to receive the strong support of the Ministry of Education. The Ministry has expressed its intent to adopt the course as part of the regular civic education curriculum in the country in the near future.

IFES received a donation from Exxon-Mobil provided funding to print and distribute the textbook in both Kazakh and Russian. The new books were distributed to pilot schools

added for the beginning of the winter semester in January. The number of “new “ schools added was a function of the number of available books, as IFES is dependent on outside donor funding for printing and distribution. Exxon-Mobil and UNDP were donors who generously contributed funding resources in the second quarter for the printing and distribution of both the Russian and Kazakh language versions of the book.

### ***IFES Expands Teacher Training Efforts***

With upgrades to the textbook, and with the prospect of continued donor support for printing and distribution, the IFES civics course and textbook in Kazakhstan has the potential of continued growth, expansion, and influence in the instruction of civics and democracy in the country. IFES has linked teacher training with the expanded use of the textbook as an essential, complimentary program. While the book itself may be available to more and more schools across the country, it will only succeed if schoolteachers receive the proper training in its instruction. Thus, an equal priority has been placed on training teachers in small group sessions wherever the book and course are introduced for piloting. To this end, IFES has worked with the Institute for Higher Teacher’s Qualifications to construct a training program and methodology that takes advantage of existing teacher skills and imports new training methods.

During the second quarter, IFES conducted a series of training sessions for newly participating pilot schools in Kazakhstan, holding sessions in the north and west of the country. A team of teacher-trainers trained by IFES conducted the sessions jointly with IFES staff. The new, interactive methods of the course and textbook have proven challenging to some teachers, though teachers who have already been through the program or are in their second year of teaching the IFES material have adapted to the new approach and proven very effective in leading and inspiring their students. In preparing a third edition of the textbook, IFES will pay closer attention to the regional situation in Kazakhstan, as well as the country’s history and local traditions. The book will be even more interactive and challenge readers to think on a number of levels of analysis, including individual, local, national, regional and global.

IFES and its teacher-trainers will make efforts to monitor progress in the newly-added schools by making periodic site visits, which will also allow teachers and students to ask questions. IFES staff made a number of such visits in the second quarter, dropping in on pilot schools during the course of travels to conduct additional teacher training or execute other student-based initiatives. During the visits with teachers, IFES had the opportunity to learn how the course was being taught and what, if any, problems had arisen. IFES took special care to meet with school directors as well as teachers, considering that the school directors determine how many hours per semester the course is allotted, and whether it is used as a supplemental course, stand-alone course, or used to augment the existing *Man and Society* course. It is anticipated that the IFES civics course will be phased in as a stand-alone, definitive course in due time, though the transition will by necessity be a gradual process. The school directors in almost all cases were extremely supportive of the course and materials, and appreciated the “individual” attention paid to their schools, teachers and students. While the Ministry of Education’s support has been vital in the ongoing conducting of this project, meeting with individual school directors,

as possible, has served to cement the commitment of piloting the IFES course and book at the local level.

Special emphasis was placed on conducting conducted trainings in southern, predominantly Kazakh-speaking regions. USAID has designated these areas as a priority for civil society and civic education programming. In Shymkent and Taraz, IFES Project Manager Bradley Austin and Communications Coordinator Dina Hasenova conducted trainings for teachers on the textbook/course project and the other student-based initiatives in select schools. Trainings were focused on the Student Local Government Day (SLGD) and Student Action Committee (SAC) programs, and IFES worked with more than 40 teachers and local officials. The trainings, while having a short-term effect by including new teachers and students into the projects, will also have a longer term benefit by increasing the number of pilot schools incorporating IFES projects for the upcoming 2002-2003 school year.

At the March 2002 Civic Education Olympiad in Almaty, a mix of experienced and new teachers had the opportunity to meet and learn more about the IFES programs. Teacher training sessions on all student projects were detailed and extensive and allowed participants the time to discuss the programs' strengths and weaknesses. In addition, the sessions provided teachers with a chance to examine and review the draft Teachers' Manual with directly with the document's primary author.

Mrs. Napper, wife of U.S. Ambassador Larry Napper, actively participated in the Teachers' Training session. She found the teachers at the event to be highly engaged, probing with questions and eager for more information. Mrs. Napper led a question-and-answer session and reviewed the norms and practices of curriculum organization based on western standards. She voiced her great support for the IFES program, and wished it success for the future. Mrs. Napper graciously donated her time to the event and pledged to be a continuing advocate for school-based civic education initiatives and teacher training efforts.

The training sessions for teachers in the south marks a new era for IFES, as IFES was able to expand to the new regions with its student-based in initiatives in support of the course and textbook project. Also, it was one of the first occasions in which Kazakh has proven the primary language of use in the student programs outside of the book, as the Student Action Committees and Student Local Government Days will feature Kazakh as the working language of those projects. The training sessions at the Almaty Student Civic Education Olympiad allowed teachers to compare notes, including lessons learned in student instruction and use of the teacher's manual and textbook. The teachers provided a number of recommendations for the improvement of the written materials, including enhancing content and providing additional instruction for student exercises.

IFES remains committed to promoting teacher training as a full and equal part of all of its student-based civic education initiatives.

### ***Civic Education Student Olympiad***

One of IFES' landmark civic education events of the quarter was its third annual Republican Civic Education Olympiad. The Olympiad brings together the top-performing students from the IFES pilot schools nationwide. The event was held on March 28-29 in Almaty, with the support of the Center for Civic Education. The Olympiad served as the culmination of regional student tournaments conducted among pilot schools in the month of February. Students participating in the regional qualifying rounds were trying to become one of the sixteen finalists (one from each of the 14 oblasts and the cities of Almaty and Astana) invited to Almaty to participate in the national Olympiad. For the first time the Olympiad was held in both Russian and Kazakh.

All students had to complete written examinations and essays on topics assigned to them on the first day of the event. Those receiving the highest aggregate scores were chosen as finalists. The four finalists then made oral presentations on topics randomly assigned, having thirty minutes apiece to prepare. The final competition showcased the students' abilities to think critically, present their thoughts and ideas in an organized and convincing manner, and display their skills of public speaking. IFES has sought in its student programs to not only provide students with knowledge of democratic practice, but also develop personal skills that will serve them throughout their lives. In the end a Kazakh-speaking girl emerged as the winner of the competition, and received the grand prize for her achievement.

IFES partnered with a local NGO, the Almaty-based Center for Civic Education (CCE), in conducting the Olympiad. The CCE helped IFES with designing, planning and managing the Olympiad. IFES plans to delegate more responsibilities for future tournaments to CCE as an equal partner, eventually making the event a wholly local, sustainable program.

IFES staff worked with USIS and USAID in preparing a press release for the event, which attracted television coverage. The four Olympiad finalists, U.S. Ambassador Larry Napper and IFES/Kazakhstan Program Manager Bradley Austin gave televised interviews after completion of the competition.

Along with the representatives from the U.S. Embassy and Ministry of Education, the Central Election Commission (CEC) also sent representatives, who addressed the students with words of encouragement and support for IFES programs.

As in previous Olympiads, IFES/Kazakhstan worked with the Ministry of Education in planning the event. The Ministry indicated that they plan to incorporate next years' IFES Olympiad into their official programming, in which the Olympiad will be fully and formally recognized by all educational institutions. The annual event has been hailed by the Ministry of Education, the Institute for Higher Teacher's Qualifications, and the Academy of Science as a positive experience for students and a way for them to showcase what they have learned through the IFES civic education course. All participants gained greater exposure and personal attention of education officials, and received acknowledgement for their academic achievements. Past Olympiad winners and

finalists have been awarded prizes and given opportunities to further advance their study, and this year's finalists will also have these opportunities, with support of the Ministry and other local and international partners.

IFES' third annual Civic Education Olympiad for students from its pilot schools was perhaps its most high profile to date, with the U.S. Ambassador and Mrs. Napper, representatives of the Central Election Commission, and officials from the Ministry of Education in attendance. The competition among students was spirited, and the talent and ability of all the students was exceptional.

### ***Student Action Committees***

During the second quarter, IFES/Kazakhstan partnered with IFES/Kyrgyzstan to create materials for the Student Action Committee program, incorporating lessons learned from IFES' recent experience in Kyrgyzstan. Funding, logistical support, and administrative oversight improvements were discussed, and changes were made to the instructional teacher-mentor's manual in order to improve the program. Several Student Action Committees were conducted in schools throughout the country. SACs took place with students from pilot schools in the Almaty area, Atyrau, and cities in the north and east participating. Students were guided by teachers and worked in groups to address problems of community or school concern. Teachers had been trained beforehand, and used approved training manuals to guide the activities. In some cases students worked with members of local NGOs on problem-solving strategies, and worked on action plans to identify, attack and resolve the problems at hand, much the same way a genuine NGO conducts its work. The program challenges students to think creatively and critically, and identify a solution to a problem using the resources and energies available to them. The exercise has been hailed as a way to generate students' interest in becoming active citizens in the future who will show initiative and work creatively as problem-solvers in their families and their communities.

### ***Student Local Government Day***

IFES completed the first round of its Student Local Government Day project in Atyrau in January. Over thirty students participated, an increase over the number of students participating in the program there in 2001. Students were welcomed by the Akimiat of Atyrau and were placed with officials in the mayor's office, the local Maslikhat, and with members of the local judiciary. Students were given inside access to local officials' work environments and experienced first-hand what it's like to serve as an elected official. In some cases students were treated to policy meetings and hearings, and were introduced to other officials. The students were encouraged to ask questions in order to gain a better appreciation of the officials' particular jobs. After the experience students completed an essay on their experiences, which were shared with teacher-mentors and with IFES. IFES took the essays and extracted lessons learned as it continues to make the experience the best possible for all students and officials.

As in 2001, the project enjoyed the support of local governmental bodies. It is anticipated that this project will continue as an annual event organized and conducted by local schools and teachers, in partnership with government. In addition, local NGOs have been

trained to serve as intermediaries, thereby enhancing their own role with local government and leading to a greater eventual degree of the project's sustainability.

### ***New Program Initiative Starts in Earnest***

In an effort to build on other programs, IFES/Kazakhstan, in conjunction with other IFES Central Asia offices, began identifying the best qualified female students for a Young Women's Leadership Conference to take place in early May in Kyrgyzstan. The event seeks to identify the problems young women face in the region and create a multi-national working committee to bring greater attention to the problem of gender inequality. The committee is to be made up of participating pilot school students from IFES' civic education programs, who will receive training in gender development problems as well as sharpen personal skills such as public speaking and leadership. The most active female participant from previous IFES programs is the first invitee from IFES/Kazakhstan, following by the top two finalists from the Third Civic Education Olympiad. The other two participants were being identified through an open exam competition in IFES' pilot schools, and were to be selected in early April. Two local trainers, one teacher, and an IFES/Kazakhstan program representative will be traveling with the students as part of the Kazakhstani delegation attending the event.

## **II. MATERIALS PRODUCED**

- Student Civic Education Olympiad Final Report

## **III. ISSUES AND PROBLEMS**

IFES/Kazakhstan continued to work during the second quarter on gaining clarification for what tax obligations it has as an international developmental, non-governmental organization. The IFES/Kazakhstan office continues to pay many of the normal taxes, such as to the Kazakh retirement fund and ecological taxes as necessary, as well as the Value Added Tax on all purchases. This should not be the case, as defined by the U.S.-Kazakhstan Bi-lateral Agreement. Since the tax authorities do not recognize the Agreement, they refused to grant the waiver. Continued efforts by IFES (in conjunction with other NGOs) to get all tax liabilities clarified, either by the Ministry of State Revenues and Taxation or by the U.S. Embassy and USAID, have gone unfulfilled.

In regard to ongoing IFES programming, the Ministry of Education continues to provide a high degree of support. Support for the Civic Education Olympiad, however, proved to be a bit of a disappointment. In February, with the event less than a month away, the Ministry informed IFES that it could not back the program in its current form, even though it had been contacted about the Olympiad well in advance. IFES found the Ministry's concerns to be somewhat frivolous and baseless. IFES had tried to schedule a meeting with the Ministry starting in November 2001 to discuss the Olympiad, but those efforts did not produce a meeting. As a result, the Ministry limited their real support for the Olympiad, stating that all "official" Olympiads need to be sanctioned as part of the legislation on education, though the officials did say that they would make such an amendment for the 2003 Olympiad. The Ministry did send a representative to attend the

Olympiad, but IFES feels that continued disorganization and “selective memory” still plague the Ministry, in spite of the comprehensive Protocol of Understanding signed with IFES in June 2001. The relationship will continue to be monitored in the upcoming period, as the school-based civic education activities shift and IFES efforts are concentrated on the Democracy Summer Camps and revision of volume two of the student textbook.

#### **IV. RESULTS BASED ON WP ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED DURING Q2 FY 2002**

##### **1. Secondary School Course Development**

Teachers provided with support to enhance instruction of the civic education textbook and related practical exercises. Parents become acquainted with civic education concepts through their children. Students are left with a better understanding of basic concepts of democracy and civic education issues. Training materials developed and used to assist teachers. Students demonstrate their knowledge via exams and participation in extracurricular activities.

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In further support of the curriculum effort, IFES continues training seminars that introduce participating teachers to the IFES textbook, teacher's manual and related practical exercises; and present teachers with instruction on how to most effectively use the materials developed by IFES.

During the second quarter, IFES conducted a series of training sessions for newly participating pilot schools in Kazakhstan, holding sessions in the north, south and west of the country. Special emphasis was placed on conducting conducted trainings in southern, predominantly Kazakh-speaking regions. In Shymkent and Taraz, IFES conducted trainings for more than 40 teachers on the textbook/course project and the other student-based initiatives in select schools. These training sessions marked a new era for IFES, as IFES was able to expand to the new regions, which will help to increase the number of pilot schools incorporating IFES projects for the upcoming 2002-2003 school year.

Due to the revision of the Civic Education textbook, IFES worked with local civic education expert Elena Vinogradova to create a new draft of the Teacher's Manual and synchronize the two documents.

During the March 2002 Civic Education Olympiad in Almaty teacher training sessions were also held and allowed a mix of experienced and new teachers had the opportunity to meet and learn more about the IFES programs. Training sessions on all student projects were detailed and extensive and allowed participants the time to discuss the programs' strengths and weaknesses. In addition, the sessions provided teachers with a chance to examine and review the draft Teachers' Manual directly with the document's primary author. Mrs. Napper, wife of U.S. Ambassador Larry Napper, participated in the training session. Mrs. Napper led a question-and-answer session and reviewed the norms and practices of curriculum organization based on western standards.

To supplement these evaluation tools, IFES proposes a Student Olympiad similar to the event already held in Kazakhstan in March 2000 and 2001. IFES will launch a partnership with a local NGO to organize the Olympiad event. IFES anticipates that students and teachers from the schools using the IFES textbook will attend the Student Olympiad and Teacher's Conference following the introductory semester of the course.

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## **2. Student Action Committees**

Students gain hands-on experience in creative problem-solving. Relationships established between schools, teachers, local government, NGOs, media and others. Teachers trained to mentor the project. Students are left with a better understanding of basic concepts of community problem-solving through hands-on “democracy-in-action” project. Training materials developed and used to assist teachers. Students apply civics lessons to local community betterment effort, and gain an appreciation of the level of democracy and representative government that exists on that level.

During the second quarter, IFES/Kazakhstan partnered with IFES/Kyrgyzstan to create materials for the Student Action Committee program. Several Student Action Committees took place with students from pilot schools in the Almaty area, Atyrau, and cities in the north and east participating. SAC teacher training sessions in the south helped to bring the program to new regions and were one of the first occasions to introduce Kazakh as the working language of the Student Action Committee projects.

## **3. Student Local Government Day**

Students are familiarized with organization and process of local government bodies (akims). Students build relationships with local government officials. Training materials/agendas used to assist and develop relationships between students and local government officials. Teachers begin to build capacity to eventually take over administration of the project upon IFES withdrawal from Kazakhstan. This will include the preparation of a “How-to” manual related to this activity. Students gain a better understanding of citizens' responsibilities with respect to local government in a democratic society. IFES will evaluate the results of the activity by reviewing the content of student essays.

IFES completed the first round of its Student Local Government Day project in Atyrau in January. Over thirty students participated, an increase over the number of students participating in the program there in 2001. Students were welcomed by the Akimiat of Atyrau and were placed with officials in the mayor's office, the local Maslikhat, and with members of the local judiciary. Students were given inside access to local officials' work environments and experienced first-hand what it's like to serve as an elected official. In some cases students were treated to policy meetings and hearings, and were introduced to other officials. The students were encouraged to ask questions in order to gain a better appreciation of the officials' particular jobs. In addition, local NGOs have been trained to

serve as intermediaries, thereby enhancing their own role with local government and leading to a greater eventual degree of the project's sustainability.

SLGD training sessions in the south helped to expand this program and featured Kazakh as the primary language of use in the student programs, such as SLGD, outside of the textbook.

#### **4. Democracy Summer Camps**

Increased understanding of civic education/democratic issues. Increased knowledge of local political/social/economic issues. Training capacity of teachers and local NGOs developed. Local NGOs administrative/ developmental capacity developed. IFES staff, along with NGO partners, will design an evaluation tool to assess knowledge gained as a result of the camp. IFES will also request an evaluative report, focusing on areas of future improvement, from all implementing partners. The anticipated funding contribution from IFES during Year 2 is 70% of the total cost of the camps. IFES plans to meet the Year II cost-sharing target by seeking local in-kind contributions, NGO support and volunteer assistance.

Sites for the northern and southern Democracy Summer Camps were scouted during the second quarter. Sanatoria in and around Almaty and Oskemen were evaluated as possible host sites for the camps. The first camp was tentatively slated to take place in late June in Almaty Oblast.

#### **5. Information Resource Development**

Increased interest in and access to election and civic education related materials.

IFES shared material resources with schools and NGOs with whom it worked regionally in the second quarter of FY 2002.

#### **6. Electoral Reform**

Commitment to electoral sector reform enables technical assistance to be offered. Election law in turn sustains improvements that bring it closer to meeting international standards and norms.

IFES was a regular participant in Election Law Working Group discussions with the CEC, NDI, and OSCE. IFES met and discussed election sector activities with the CEC in Astana and while CEC representatives attended the Student Olympiad at the end of March.